

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM ISLAMABAD DATED JULY 2, 1974
SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO DACCA, LONDON, NEW
DELHI IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 6291

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, BG, IN

SUBJECT: REACTION TO BHUTTO'S BANGLADESH VISIT

SUMMARY: SPEAKING ON RETURN FROM DACCA, PRIMIN BHUTTO LAUDED
WARMTH OF HIS WELCOME IN BANGLADESH. TALKS WITH MUJIB WERE
SUCCESSFUL, HE SAID, AND WOULD BE CONTINUED WHEN LATTER VISITS
PAKISTAN. HE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS REGARDING DISCUSSION OF
FINANCIAL TOPICS, HOWEVER. FOLLOWING DAY, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT
IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER CASTIGATED BDG FOR ITS
UNREALISTIC FINANCIAL DEMANDS AND ITS EFFORTS DOWNPLAY BHUTTO'S
VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIMIN BHUTTO RETURNED TO ISLAMABAD LATE EVENING JUNE 29
FROM HIS THREE-DAY VISIT TO DACCA. ADDRESSING WELCOMING
CROWD AT AIRPORT, BRIMIN DESCRIBED RECEPTION HE HAD RECEIVED
FROM PEOPLE OF DACCA AS MOST WARM, SPONTANEOUS AND HISTORIC
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THAT HE HAD EXPERIENCED ANYWHERE IN WORLD. THEY HAD ACCORDED

HIM THIS WELCOME, HE DECLARED, NOT IN HIS PERSONAL CAPACITY BUT AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN. THIS PROVED BEYOND DOUBT THAT DECISIONS HIS GOVERNMENT AND HIS PARTY HAD TAKEN WITH REGARD TO BANGLADESH WERE CORRECT ONES AND WERE IN PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS. WARM RECEPTION ALSO PROVED THAT PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH DID NOT AGREE WITH INSINUATIONS REGARDING HIS OWN ROLE AND THAT OF HIS PARTY IN DEVELOPMENTS OF EARLY 1971 WHICH LED TO BANGLADESH SECESSION.

2. AS TO PRIMIN'S TALKS WITH SHEIKH MUJIB, BHUTTO DESCRIBED THEM AS "SUCCESSFUL" AND SAID THEY WOULD BE CONTINUED IN NEAR FUTURE WHEN MUJIB VISITED PAKISTAN. IN DISCUSSIONS OF FINANCIAL MATTERS, HOWEVER, MUJIB HAD WANTED TO LEAVE SETTLEMENT UP TO HIM PERSONALLY, BHUTTO SAID. HE HAD RESPONDED THAT PAKISTAN WAS NOT HIS "JAGIR"(FIEF) BUT WAS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY WITH FUNCTIONING INSTITUTIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE BROUGHT INTO THIS QUESTION.

3. IN BRIEF COMMENT ON ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH AS HE SAW THEM, BHUTTO COMMENTED THAT ANYTHING HE MIGHT SAY WOULD BE CONSTRUED AS CRITICISM. PRICES WERE BEYOND BELIEF. PRICES ADMITTEDLY HAD RISEN IN PAKISTAN AS WELL, BUT HERE SALARIES HAD ALSO BEEN RAISED AND COUNTRY WAS ON THE ROAD TO PROGRESS .

4. FOLLOWING UP ON PRIMIN'S RETURN, FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY SENIOR CORRESPONDENT H.K. BURKI IN JULY 1 GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES DENOUNCED BDG FOR ITS EXCESSIVE FINANCIAL DEMANDS AND CASTIGATED BENGALIEE LEADERSHIP FOR ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME GIVEN BHUTTO BY DACCA POPULACE. QUESTION OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES WAS SO COMPLEX THAT ONLY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS COULD POSSIBLY COME UP WITH REALISTIC SETTLEMENT, BURKI ASSERTED, AND THIS WAS PRECISELY WHAT BHUTTO HAD OFFERED. BDG, HOWEVER, HAD BEHAVED IN MANNER REMINISCENT OF OLD DAYS WHEN "EAST PAKISTAN LEADERSHIP USED TO BULLY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTO GIVING THEM LARGER ALLOCATIONS", AN ATTITUDE TOTALLY UNREALISTIC TODAY. PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE "BULLDOZED" INTO PAYING "ASTRONOMICAL FIGURES ARBITRARILTY DETERMINED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNEMENT OF ANOTHER SOVEREIGN STATE." BANGLADESH, BURKI COMMENTED, WAS FACING GRAVE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND APPARENTLY EXPECTED PAKISTAN SOMEHOW TO BAIL THEM OUT.

5. EQUALLY ASTONISHING, BURKI CONTINUED, WERE EFFORTS ON PART OF BDG "PARTICULARLY ITS POWERFUL INDIAN LOBBY" TO DOWNGRADE WARMTH AND SIZE OF BHUTTO'S WELCOME BY POPULACE. THEY HAD ATTEMPTED TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM GATHERING TO

WELCOME HIM BY IMPOSING SECTION 144, CLAMPING ON CURFEW AND ATTEMPTING TO STAGE ANTI-BHUTTO DEMONSTRATIONS. DESPITE THIS, PEOPLE HAD DEFIED THE BAN AND ACCORDED BHUTTO "SUCHA ROUSING WELCOME THAT AT TIMES IT HAD BORDERED ON HYSTERIA".

6. AS TO FUTURE, BURKI CONCLUDED, "IT IS CLEARLY NOW FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH TO MAKE UP ITS MIND AS TO WHETHER IT WANTS TO CONTINUE MAKING IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS ORWHETHER IT WOULD LIKE TO RESOLVE THE REMAINING ISSUES ON THE BASIS OF JUSTICE".

7. COMMENT: GOP SEEMS TO HAVE INTENDED BHUTTO VISIT TO DACCA PRIMARILY AS A CEREMONIAL AND SYMBOLIC EXERCISE, DESIGNED TO DRAMATIZE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES A TO ENHANCE BHUTTO'S IMAGE AS PEACEMAKER IN THE PROCESS. PAKS WERE PREPARED TO HAVE BENGALEES RAISE QUESTIONS OF DIVISION OF ASSETS AND TRANSFER OF MORE BIHARIS TO PAKISTAN. APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WERE SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY INTENSITY WITH WHICH BDG PRESSED THESE ISSUES AND ESPECIALLY BY MAGNITUDE OF MUJIB'S FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT DEMANDS.
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